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V E R S E S

O N T H E

D E A T H

O F

Doctor S W I F T.

Written by Himself: Nov. 1731.

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V E R S E S

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1941



V E R S E S

On the D E A T H of

Dr. S W I F T.

*Occasioned by reading the following
Maxim in ROCHFOLCAULT.*

*Dans l'adversité de nos meilleurs amis nous trouvons
toujours quelque choses, qui ne nous déplaisent pas.*

A S *Rockfoucault* his Maxims drew
From Nature, I believe 'em true :

They argue no corrupted Mind

In him ; The Fault is in Mankind.

This Maxim more than all the rest
Is thought too base for human Breast :

“ In all Distresses of our Friends

“ We first consult our private Ends :

“ While Nature, kindly bent to ease us,

“ Points out some Circumstance to please us.”

If this perhaps your Patience move ;

Let Reason and Experience prove.

We all behold with envious Eyes
 Our Equal rais'd above our Size.
 I love my Friend as well as you :
 But why should he obstruct my view ?
 Then, let me have the higher Post ;
 Suppose it but an Inch at most.
 If in a Battle you should find
 One, whom you love of all Mankind,
 Had some heroick Action done,
 A Champion kill'd or Trophy won ;
 Rather than thus be overtopt,
 Wou'd you not wish his Laurels cropt ?
 Dear honest Ned is in the Gout,
 Lies rack'd with Pain, and you without :
 How patiently you hear him groan !
 How glad the Case is not your own !

What Poet would not mourn to see
 His Brother write as well as he ?
 But rather than they should excell
 He'd wish his Rivals all in Hell.

Her End when Emulation misses,
 She turns to Envy, Stings and Hisses:

The strongest Friendship yields to Pride,
Unless the Odds be on our Side.

Vain human Kind ! fantastick Race !
Thy various Follies who can trace ?
Self-love, Ambition, Envy, Pride,
Their Empire in our Hearts divide.
Give others Riches, Power, and Station ;
'Tis all on me a Ufurpation.

I have no Title to aspire,
Yet, when you sink, I seem the higher.

In *Pope* I cannot read a Line,
But with a Sigh I wish it mine :

When he can in one Couplet fix
More Sense, than I can do in six,

It gives me such a jealous Fit ;
I cry, Pox take him and his Wit.

I grieve to be outdone by *Gay*
In my own humorous biting way.

Arbutnot is no more my Friend,
Who dares to Irony pretend ;

Which I was born to introduce ;
Refin'd it first, and shew'd its Use.

St. *John*, as well as *Pultney*, knows
 That I had some Repute for Prose;
 And, till they drove me out of Date,
 Could maul a Minister of State.
 If they have mortify'd my Pride,
 And made me throw my Pen aside;
 If with such Talents Heav'n hath blest 'em,
 Have I not reason to detest 'em?

To all my Foes dear Fortune send
 Thy Gifts, but never to my Friend:
 I tamely can endure the first;
 But this with Envy makes me burst.

Thus much may serve by way of Proem;
 Proceed we therefore to our Poem.

The Time is not remote when I
 Must by the Course of Nature die;
 When I foresee, my special Friends
 Will try to find their private Ends.
 And tho' 'tis hardly understood,
 Which way my Death can do them good;
 Yet thus, methinks, I hear them speak:
 See, how the Dean begins to break!

Poor Gentleman! he droops apace;
 You plainly find it in his Face.
 That old Vertigo in his Head
 Will never leave him, till he's dead.
 Besides, his Memory decays:
 He recollects not what he says:
 He cannot call his Friends to mind;
 Forgets the place where last he din'd:
 Plies you with Stories o'er and o'er;
 He told 'em fifty times before.
 How does he fancy, we can fit
 To hear his out-of-fashion Wit?
 But he takes up with younger Folks,
 Who, for his Wine, will bear his Jokes.
 Faith, he must make his Stories shorter,
 Or change his Comrades once a Quarter:
 In half the time, he talks them round:
 There must another Sett be found.

For Poetry, he's past his Prime;
 He takes an Hour to find a Rhime:
 His Fire is out, his Wit decay'd,
 His Fancy funk, his Muse a Jade.

I'd have him throw away his Pen ;
But there's no talking to some Men.

And then, their Tendernefs appears,
By adding largely to my years :
He's older than he would be reckon'd,
And well remembers *Charles* the Second.
He hardly drinks a Pint of Wine ;
And that, I doubt, is no good Sign.
His Stomach too begins to fail :
Laft Year we thought him ftrong and hale ;
But now he's quite another thing ;
I wifh he may hold out till Spring.
Then hug themfelves, and reafon thus :
It is not yet fo bad with us.

In fuch a cafe they talk in Tropes,
And, by their Fears, exprefs their Hopes.
Some great Misfortune to portend,
No Enemy can match a Friend.
With all the Kindnefs they profefs
The Merit of a lucky Guefs
(When daily Howd'y's come of Courfe,
And Servants anfwer, " worfe and worfe!")

Wou'd please 'em better, than to tell,
That, God be prais'd, the Dean is well.

Then he, who prophesy'd the best,
Approves the Judgment to the rest :

“ You know, I always fear'd the worst,
“ And often told you so at first.

He'd rather choose that I should die,
Than his Prediction prove a Lie :

Not one foretels, I shall recover;
But all agree to give me over,

Yet should some Neighbour feel a Pain
Just in the Parts where I complain ;
How many a Message would he send ?
What hearty Prayers, that I should mend ?
Enquire what Regimen I kept ;
What gave me Ease, and how I slept :
And more lament when I was dead,
Than all the Snivelers round my Bed.

My good Companions, never fear;
For, though you may mistake a Year,
Though your Prognosticks run too fast,
They must be verify'd at last.

Behold the fatal Day arrive !

How is the Dean ? he's just alive.

Now the departing Prayer is read ;

He hardly breathes. The Dean is dead.

Before the Passing Bell begun,

The News thro' half the Town has run.

Oh ! may we all for Death prepare !

What has he left ? And who's his Heir ?

I know no more than what the News is ;

'Tis all bequeath'd to publick Uses.

To publick Uses ! there's a Whim !

What had the Publick done for him ?

Mere Envy, Avarice, and Pride :

He gave it all ---- but first he dy'd.

And had the Dean in all the Nation

No worthy Friend ? No poor Relation ?

So ready to do Strangers Good,

Forgetting his own Flesh and Blood ?

Now Grubstreet Wits are all employ'd ;

With Elegies the Town is cloy'd :

Some Paragraph in every Paper

To curse the Dean, or bless the Drapier.

The Doctors, tender of their Fame,
 Wisely on me lay all the Blame.
 We must confess his Case was nice;
 But he would never take Advice.
 Had he been rul'd, for ought appears,
 He might have liv'd these twenty Years:
 For, when we open'd him, we found,
 That all his vital Parts were found.
 From *Dublin* soon to *London* spread,
 'Tis told at Court, the Dean is dead.
 And Lady S---- in the Spleen
 Runs laughing up to tell ***.
 ** so gracious, mild and good
 Cries, " is he gone! 'tis time he shou'd.

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Now *Chartres*, at ----- Levee,

Tells with a Sneer the Tidings heavy:

Why, if he dy'd without his Shoes,
 (Cries -----) I'm sorry for the News:
 Oh, were the Wretch but living still,
 And in his place my good Friend *Will*!
 Or had a Mitre on his Head,
 Provided *Bolingbroke* were dead!

Now *Curl* his Shop from Rubbish drains:
 Three genuine Tomes of *Swift's* Remains!
 And then to make them pass the glibber,
 Revis'd by *Tibbalds*, *Moore* and *Cibber*.
 He'll treat me as he does my Betters,
 Publish my Will, my Life, my Letters;
 Revive the Libels born to die;
 Which *Pope* must bear as well as I.

Here shift the Scene, to represent
 How those I love my Death lament.
 Poor *Pope* will grieve a Month, and *Gay*
 A Week, and *Arbuthnot* a Day.

St. *John* himself will scarce forbear
 To bite his Pen, and drop a Tear.
 The rest will give a Shrug, and cry,
 " I'm sorry, but we all must die!

Indifference clad in Wisdom's Guise

All Fortitude of Mind supplies :

For how can stony Bowels melt,

In those, who never Pity felt ?

When we are lashed, they kiss the Rod,

Resigning to the Will of God.

The Fools, my Juniors by a Year,

Are tortur'd with Suspence and Fear ;

Who wisely thought my Age a Screen,

When Death approacht, to stand between ;

The Screen remov'd, their Hearts are trembling ;

They mourn for me without dissembling.

My female Friends, whose tender Hearts

Have better learn'd to act their Parts,

Receive the News in doleful Dumps :

“ The Dean is dead (pray what is Trumps?)

“ Then, Lord, have Mercy on his Soul.

“ (Ladies, I'll venture for the Vole.)

“ Six Deans, they say, must bear the Pall.

“ (I wish I knew what King to call.)

“ Madam, your Husband will attend

“ The Fun'ral of so good a Friend :

- “ No, Madam, 'tis a shocking Sight,
 “ And he's engag'd to morrow Night :
 “ My Lady Club will take it ill,
 “ If he shou'd fail her at Quadrill.
 “ He lov'd the Dean (I lead a Heart)
 “ But dearest Friends, they say, must part.
 “ His Time was come, he ran his Race;
 “ We hope he's in a better Place.

Why do we grieve that Friends should die?
 No Loss more easy to supply.
 One Year is past; a different Scene!
 No farther mention of the Dean:
 Who now, alas, no more is mist,
 Than if he never did exist.
 Where's now the Favourite of *Apollo*?
 Departed : ----- *And his Works must follow* :
 Must undergo the common Fate,
 His kind of Wit is out of Date.

Some Country Squire to *Lintot* goes,
 Enquires for *Swift* in Verse and Prose,
 Says *Lintot*, “ I have heard the Name,
 “ He dy'd a Year ago. The same.

He fearches all the Shop in vain.

“ Sir, you may find them in *Duck Lane*.

“ I fent them, with a Load of Books,

“ Laft Monday to the Pastry Cooks.

“ To fancy, they could live a Year!

“ I find, you’re but a Stranger here.

“ The Dean was famous in his Time,

“ And had a kind of Knack at Rhime.

“ His way of Writing now is paft :

“ The Town has got a better Taſte.

“ I keep no antiquated Stuff,

“ But Spick and Span I have enough,

“ Pray, do but give me leave to ſhow ’em:

“ Here’s *Colley Cibber*’s Birth-day Poem.

“ This Ode you never yet have ſeen

“ By *Stephen Duck* upon the Queen.

“ Then, here’s a Letter finely pen’d

“ Againſt the Craftsman and his Friend:

“ It clearly ſhews, that all Reflection

“ On Miniſters is Diſ-affection.

“ Next, here’s Sir *Robert*’s Vindication,

“ And Mr. *Henley*’s laſt Oration.

“ The

“ The Hawkers have not got ’em yet :

“ Your Honour please to buy a Sett?

Suppose me dead ; and then suppose

A Club assembled at the Rose:

Where, from Discourse of this and that,

I grow the Subject of their Chat :

The Dean, if we believe Report,

Was never ill receiv’d at Court.

Altho’ ironically grave,

He sham’d the Fool, and lash’d the Knave.

“ Sir, I have heard another Story ;

“ He was a most confounded Tory ;

“ And grew, or he is much bely’d,

“ Extremely dull before he dy’d.

Can we the *Drapier* e’er forget?

Is not our *Nation* in his Debt?

’Twas he that writ the *Drapier’s Letters*---!

“ He shou’d have left them for his *Betters*;

“ We had a hundred *abler Men*,

“ Nor need *depend* upon his *Pen*----.

“ Say what you will about his *reading*,

“ You never can *defend* his *Breeding* :

- " Who, in his *Satyrs* running riot,
 " Cou'd never leave the *World* in quiet ---- ;
 " Attacking, when he took the *Whim*,
 " *Court, City, Camp*; all one to him ---.
 " But, why wou'd he, except he *slobber'd*,
 " Offend our *Patriot*, Great Sir *R----*?
 " Whose *Councils*, aid the Sov'reign Pow'r,
 " To *save* the *Nation* ev'ry hour.
 " What *Scenes* of Evil he unravels,
 " In *Satyrs, Libels, Lying Travels* !
 " Not sparing his own *Clergy-Cloth*,
 " But, *eats* into it like a *Moth* ---!

Perhaps I may allow, the Dean
 Had too much Satyr in his Vein ;
 And seem'd determin'd not to starve it,
 Because no Age could more deserve it.
 Vice, if it e're can be abash'd,
 Must be or *Ridicul'd*, or *Lash'd*.
 If you *resent* it, who's to blame ?
 He neither knew *you*, nor your *Name*.
 Should Vice expect to scape Rebuke,
 Because its Owner is a Duke ?

His Friendships, still to few confin'd,
 Were always of the midling Kind :
 No Fools of Rank or Mongrel Breed,
 Who fain wou'd pass for Lords indeed ;
 Where Titles give no Right or Power,
 And Peerage is a wither'd Flower.
 He wou'd have deem'd it a Disgrace,
 If such a Wretch had known his Face.
 He never thought an Honour done him,
 Because a Peer was proud to own him :
 Wou'd rather slip aside, and choose
 To talk with Wits in dirty Shoes ;
 And scorn the Tools, with Stars and Garters,
 So often seen caressing *Chartres*.

He kept with Princes due Decorum ;
 Yet never stood in Awe before 'em.
 He follow'd *David's* Lesson just :
 In Princes never put his Trust :
 And, would you make him truly sower,
 Provoke him with a Slave in Power.

“ Alas, poor *Dean!* his only Scope
 “ Was, to be held a *Misanthrope*.

- “ This into gen’ral *Odium* drew him,
 “ Which if he lik’d, *much good may do him* :
 “ His *Zeal* was not to lash our *Crimes*,
 “ But, *Discontent* against the *Times* :
 “ For, had we made him *timely* Offers,
 “ To *raise* his *Post*, or *fill* his *Coffers*,
 “ Perhaps he might have truckled down,
 “ Like other *Brethren* of his *Gown* :
 “ For *Party* he would scarce have bled--- ;
 “ I say no more---, because he’s *dead*---.
 “ What *Writings* has he left behind--?
 I hear, they’re of a diff’rent kind :
 A few, in *Verse* ; but most, in *Prose*---.
 “ Some *high-flown Pamphlets*, I suppose--- :
 “ All scribbled in the *worst* of *Times*,
 “ To *palliate* his Friend *Oxford*’s *Crimes*,
 “ To praise Queen *Anne*, nay more, defend her,
 “ As never fav’ring the *Pretender*--- :
 “ Or *Libels* yet conceal’d from Sight,
 “ Against the *Court* to shew his *Spight*,
 “ Perhaps, his *Travels*, *Part the Third*,
 “ A *Lye*, at ev’ry *second* Word :

“ Offensive to a *Loyal* Ear---:

“ But---*not one Sermon*, you may *swear*--,

As for his Works, in Verse or Prose,

I own my self no Judge of those.

Nor can I tell what Criticks thought 'em;

But this I know, all People bought 'em;

As with a moral View design'd,

To *please*, and to *reform* Mankind;

And, if he often miss'd his Aim,

The *World* must own it, to their *Shame*;

The *Praise* is *His*, and *Theirs* the *Blame*.

He gave the little Wealth he had,

To build a House for Fools and Mad?

To shew, by one Satyric Touch,

No Nation wanted it so much.

And since you dread no farther Lashes,

Methinks you may forgive his Ashes.

F I N I S.



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